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MARXISM AND REVISIONISM

BY

V. I. LENIN

AND

JOSEPH STALIN

INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHERS
381 FOURTH AVENUE • NEW YORK

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BY V. I. Lenin AND Joseph Stalin

INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHERS, *New York*

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PRINTED IN U.S.A.

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I. Marxism and Revisionism

There is a saying that if geometrical axioms affected human interests attempts would certainly be made to refute them. Theories of the natural sciences which conflict with the old prejudices of theology provoked, and still provoke, the most rabid opposition. No wonder, therefore, that the Marxian doctrine, which directly serves to enlighten and organise the advanced class in modern society, which indicates the tasks of this class and which proves the inevitable (by virtue of economic development) replacement of the present system by a new order—no wonder that this doctrine had to fight at every step in its course.

There is no need to speak of bourgeois science and philosophy, which are officially taught by official professors in order to befuddle the rising generation of the possessing classes and to "coach" it against the internal and foreign enemy. This science will not even hear of Marxism, declaring that it has been refuted and annihilated. The young scientists who are building their careers by refuting Socialism, and the decrepit elders who preserve the traditions of all the various outworn "systems," attack Marx with equal zeal. The progress of Marxism and the fact that its ideas are spreading and taking firm hold among the working class inevitably tend to increase the frequency and intensity of these bourgeois attacks on Marxism, which only becomes stronger, more hardened, and more tenacious every time it is "annihilated" by official science.

But Marxism by no means consolidated its position immediately even among doctrines which are connected with the struggle of the working class and which are current mainly among the proletariat. In the first half-century of its existence (from the 'forties on) Marxism was engaged in combating theories fundamentally hostile to it. In the first half of the 'forties Marx and Engels demolished the radical Young Hegelians, who professed philosophical idealism. At the end of the 'forties the struggle invaded the domain of economic doctrine, in opposition to Proudhonism. The 'fifties saw the completion of this struggle: the criticism of the parties and doctrines which manifested them-

selves in the stormy year of 1848. In the 'sixties the struggle was transferred from the domain of general theory to a domain closer to the direct labour movement: the ejection of Bakuninism from the International. In the early 'seventies the stage in Germany was occupied for a short while by the Proudhonist Mühlberger, and in the latter 'seventies by the positivist Dühring. But the influence of both on the proletariat was already absolutely insignificant. Marxism was already gaining an unquestionable victory over all other ideologies in the labour movement.

By the 'nineties this victory was in the main completed. Even in the Latin countries, where the traditions of Proudhonism held their ground longest of all, the labour parties actually based their programmes and tactics on a Marxist foundation. The revived international organisation of the labour movement—in the shape of periodical international congresses—from the outset, and almost without a struggle, adopted the Marxist standpoint in all essentials. But after Marxism had ousted all the more or less consistent doctrines hostile to it, the tendencies expressed in those doctrines began to seek other channels. The forms and motives of the struggle changed, but the struggle continued. And the second half-century in the existence of Marxism began (in the 'nineties) with the struggle of a trend hostile to Marxism within Marxism.

Bernstein, a one-time orthodox Marxist, gave his name to this current by making the most noise and advancing the most consistent expression of the amendments to Marx, the revision of Marx, revisionism. Even in Russia, where, owing to the economic backwardness of the country and the preponderance of a peasant population oppressed by the relics of serfdom, non-Marxian Socialism has naturally held its ground longest of all, it is plainly passing into revisionism before our very eyes. Both in the agrarian question (the programmes of the municipalisation of all land) and in general questions of programme and tactics, our social-Narodniks are more and more substituting "amendments" to Marx for the moribund and obsolescent remnants of the old system, which in its own way was consistent and fundamentally hostile to Marxism.

Pre-Marxian Socialism has been smashed. It is now continuing the struglge not on its own independent soil but on the general

soil of Marxism—as revisionism. Let us, then, examine the ideological content of revisionism.

In the domain of philosophy, revisionism clung to the skirts of bourgeois professorial "science." The professors went "back to Kant"—and revisionism followed in the wake of the Neo-Kantians. The professors repeated the threadbare banalities of the priests against philosophical materialism—and the revisionists, smiling condescendingly, mumbled (word for word after the latest *Handbuch)* that materialism had been "refuted" long ago. The professors treated Hegel as a "dead dog," and while they themselves preached idealism, only an idealism a thousand times more petty and banal than Hegel's, they contemptuously shrugged their shoulders at dialectics—and the revisionists floundered after them into the swamp of philosophical vulgarisation of science, replacing "artful" (and revolutionary) dialectics by "simple" (and tranquil) "evolution." The professors earned their official salaries by adjusting both their idealist and "critical" systems to the dominant mediaeval "philosophy" (*i.e.,* to theology)—and the revisionists drew close to them and endeavored to make religion a "private affair," not in relation to the modern state, but in relation to the party of the advanced class.

What the real class significance of such "amendments" to Marx was need not be said—it is clear enough. We shall simply note that the only Marxist in the international Social-Democratic movement who criticised from the standpoint of consistent dialectical materialism the incredible banalities uttered by the revisionists was Plekhanov. This must be stressed all the more emphatically since thoroughly mistaken attempts are being made in our day to smuggle in the old and reactionary philosophical rubbish under the guise of criticising Plekhanov's tactical opportunism.*

Passing to political economy, it must be noted first of all that the "amendments" of the revisionists in this domain were much more comprehensive and circumstantial; attempts were made to influence the public by adducing "new data of economic development." It was said that concentration and the ousting of small-scale production by large-scale production do not occur in agri-

* See *Studies in the Philosophy of Marxism* by Bogdanov, Bazarov and others. This is not the place to discuss this book, and I must at present con-

culture at all, while concentration proceeds extremely slowly in commerce and industry. It was said that crises had now become rarer and of less force, and that the cartels and trusts would probably enable capital to do away with crises altogether. It was said that the "theory of the collapse" to which capitalism is heading, was unsound, owing to the tendency of class contradictions to become less acute and milder. It was said, finally, that it would not be amiss to correct Marx's theory of value in accordance with Böhm-Bawerk.

The fight against the revisionists on these questions resulted in as fruitful a revival of the theoretical thought of international Socialism as followed from Engels' controversy with Dühring twenty years earlier. The arguments of the revisionists were analysed with the help of facts and figures. It was proved that the revisionists were systematically presenting modern small-scale production in a favourable light. The technical and commercial superiority of large-scale *production* over small-scale production both in industry and in agriculture are proved by irrefutable facts. But commodity production is far less developed in agriculture, and modern statisticians and economists are usually not very skillful in picking out the special branches (sometimes even operations) in agriculture which indicate that agriculture is being progressively drawn into the *exchange* of world economy. Small-scale production maintains itself on the ruins of natural economy by a steady deterioration in nourishment, by chronic starvation, by the lengthening of the working day, by the deterioration in the quality of cattle and in the care given to cattle, in a word, by the very methods whereby handicraft production maintained itself against capitalist manufacture. Every advance in science and technology inevitably and relentlessly undermines

fine myself to stating that in the very near future I shall show in a series of articles or in a separate pamphlet that *everything* I have said in the text about the Neo-Kantian revisionists essentially applies also to these "new" Neo-Humist and Neo-Berkeleian revisionists. [See V. I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*. In 1903, Lenin parted ways with Plekhanov who was taking the road of opportunist Menshevism. During the 1905 Revolution in Russia, Plekhanov opposed the Bolshevik position on the character and driving forces of the revolution. At the time of the first imperialist war of 1914-18, he supported the Czarist aims in the war, and opposed the October Revolution of 1917. Plekhanov died in 1918.—*Ed.*]

the foundations of small-scale production in capitalist society, and it is the task of Socialist economics to investigate this process in all its—often complicated and intricate—forms and to demonstrate to the small producer the impossibility of holding his own under capitalism, the hopelessness of peasant farming under capitalism, and the necessity of the peasant adopting the standpoint of the proletarian. On this question the revisionists sinned from the scientific standpoint by superficially generalising from facts selected one-sidedly and without reference to the system of capitalism as a whole; they sinned from the political standpoint by the fact that they inevitably, whether they wanted to or not, invited or urged the peasant to adopt the standpoint of the master (*i.e.*, the standpoint of the bourgeoisie), instead of urging him to adopt the standpoint of the revolutionary proletarian.

The position of revisionism was even worse as far as the theory of crises and the theory of collapse were concerned. Only for the shortest space of time could people, and then only the most short-sighted, think of remodelling the foundations of the Marxian doctrine under the influence of a few years of industrial boom and prosperity. Facts very soon made it clear to the revisionists that crises were not a thing of the past; prosperity was followed by a crisis. The forms, the sequence, the picture of the particular crises changed, but crises remained an inevitable component of the capitalist system. While uniting production, the cartels and trusts at the same time, and in a way that was obvious to all, aggravated the anarchy of production, the insecurity of existence of the proletariat and the oppression of capital, thus intensifying class contradictions to an unprecedented degree. That capitalism is moving towards collapse—in the sense both of individual political and economic crises and of the complete wreck of the entire capitalist system—has been made very clear, and on a very broad scale, precisely by the latest giant trusts. The recent financial crisis in America and the frightful increase of unemployment all over Europe, to say nothing of the impending industrial crisis to which many symptoms are pointing—all this is resulting in the fact that the recent "theories" of the revisionists are being forgotten by everybody, even, it seems, by many of the revisionists themselves. But the lessons which this instability of the intellectuals has given the working class must not be forgotten.

As to the theory of value, it should only be said that apart from hints and sighs, exceedingly vague, for Böhm-Bawerk, the revisionists have here contributed absolutely nothing, and have therefore left no traces whatever on the development of scientific thought.

In the domain of politics, revisionism tried to revise the very foundation of Marxism, namely, the doctrine of the class struggle. Political freedom, democracy and universal suffrage remove the ground for the class struggle—we were told—and render untrue the old proposition of the *Communist Manifesto* that the workers have no country. For, they said, since the "will of the majority" prevails under democracy, one must neither regard the state as an organ of class rule, nor reject alliances with the progressive, social-reformist bourgeoisie against the reactionaries.

It cannot be disputed that these objections of the revisionists constituted a fairly harmonious system of views, namely, the old and well-known liberal bourgeois views. The liberals have always said that bourgeois parliamentarism destroys classes and class divisions, since the right to vote and the right to participate in state affairs are shared by all citizens without distinction. The whole history of Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century, and the whole history of the Russian revolution at the beginning of the twentieth, clearly show how absurd such views are. Economic distinctions are aggravated and accentuated rather than mitigated under the freedom of "democratic" capitalism. Parliamentarism does not remove, but rather lays bare the innate character even of the most democratic bourgeois republics as organs of class oppression. By helping to enlighten and to organise immeasurably wider masses of the population than those which previously took an active part in political events, parliamentarism does not make for the elimination of crises and political revolutions, but for the maximum accentuation of civil war during such revolutions. The events in Paris in the spring of 1871 and the events in Russia in the winter of 1905 showed as clear as clear could be how inevitably this accentuation comes about. The French bourgeoisie without a moment's hesitation made a deal with the common national enemy, the foreign army which had ruined its fatherland, in order to crush the proletarian movement. Whoever does not understand the inevitable inner dialectics of parliamentarism and bour-

geois democracy—which tends to an even more acute decision of a dispute by mass violence than formerly—will never be able through parliamentarism to conduct propaganda and agitation that are consistent in principle and really prepare the working-class masses to take a victorious part in such "disputes." The experience of alliances, agreements and blocs with the social-reformist liberals in the West and with the liberal reformists (Constitutional Democrats) in the Russian revolution convincingly showed that these agreements only blunt the consciousness of the masses, that they weaken rather than enhance the actual significance of their struggle by linking the fighters with the elements who are least capable of fighting and who are most vacillating and treacherous. French Millerandism—the biggest experiment in applying revisionist political tactics on a wide, a really national scale—has provided a practical judgment of revisionism which will never be forgotten by the proletariat all over the world.

A natural complement to the economic and political tendencies of revisionism was its attitude to the final aim of the Socialist movement . "The final aim is nothing, the movement is everything"—this catch-phrase of Bernstein's expresses the substance of revisionism better than many long arguments. The policy of revisionism consists in determining its conduct from case to case, in adapting itself to the events of the day and to the chops and changes of petty politics; it consists in forgetting the basic interests of the proletariat, the main features of the capitalist system as a whole and of capitalist evolution as a whole, and in sacrificing these basic interests for the real or assumed advantages of the moment. And it patently follows from the very nature of this policy that it may assume an infinite variety of forms, and that every more or less "new" question, every more or less unexpected and unforeseen turn of events, even though it may change the basic line of development only to an insignificant degree and only for the shortest period of time, will always inevitably give rise to one or another variety of revisionism.

The inevitability of revisionism is determined by its class roots in modern society. Revisionism is an international phenomenon. No more or less informed and thinking Socialist can have the slightest doubt that the relation between the orthodox and the

Bernsteinites in Germany, the Guesdites and the Jaurèsites (and now particularly the Broussites) in France, the Social-Democratic Federation and the Independent Labour Party in Great Britain, de Brouckère and Vandervelde in Belgium, the integralists and the reformists in Italy, and the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks in Russia is everywhere essentially similar, notwithstanding the gigantic variety of national and historically derived conditions in the present state of all these countries. In reality, the "division" within the present international Socialist movement is now proceeding along *one* line in all the various countries of the world, which testifies to a tremendous advance compared with thirty or forty years ago, when it was not like tendencies within a united international Socialist movement that were combatting one another within the various countries. And the "revisionism from the Left" which has begun to take shape in the Latin countries, such as "revolutionary syndicalism," is also adapting itself to Marxism while "amending" it; Labriola in Italy and Lagardelle in France frequently appeal from Marx wrongly understood to Marx rightly understood.

We cannot stop here to analyse the ideological substance of *this* revisionism; it has not yet by far developed to the extent that opportunist revisionism has, it has not yet become international, and it has not yet stood the test of one big practical battle with a Socialist Party even in one country. We shall therefore confine ourselves to the "revisionism from the Right" described above.

Wherein lies its inevitability in capitalist society? Why is it more profound than the differences of national peculiarities and degrees of capitalist development? Because in every capitalist country, side by side with the proletariat, there are broad strata of the petty bourgeoisie, small masters. Capitalism arose and is constantly arising out of small production. A number of "middle strata" are inevitably created anew by capitalism (appendages to the factory, home work, and small workshops scattered all over the country in view of the requirements of big industries, such as the bicycle and automobile industries, etc.). These new small producers are just as inevitably cast back into the ranks of the proletariat. It is quite natural that the petty-bourgeois world conception should again and again crop up in the ranks of the broad labour parties. It is quite natural that this should be so, and it

always will be so right up to the commencement of the proletarian revolution, for it would be a grave mistake to think that the "complete" proletarianisation of the majority of the population is essential before such a revolution can be achieved. What we now frequently experience only in the domain of ideology—disputes over theoretical amendments to Marx—what now crops up in practice only over individual partial issues of the labour movement as tactical differences with the revisionists and splits on these grounds, will all unfailingly have to be experienced by the working class on an incomparably larger scale when the proletarian revolution accentuates all issues and concentrates all differences on points of the most immediate importance in determining the conduct of the masses, and makes it necessary in the heat of the fight to distinguish enemies from friends and to cast out bad allies, so as to be able to deal decisive blows at the enemy.

The ideological struggle waged by revolutionary Marxism against revisionism at the end of the nineteenth century is but the prelude to the great revolutionary battles of the proletariat, which is marching forward to the complete victory of its cause despite all the waverings and weaknesses of the petty bourgeoisie.

April 1908.
V. I. Lenin, *Marx, Engels, Marxism*, pp. 71-79.

II. Differences in the European Labour Movement

The main tactical differences in the modern labour movement in Europe and America may be summed up as the struggle with two main tendencies which depart from Marxism, from the theory that has actually become dominating in this movement. These two tendencies are revisionism (opportunism and reformism) and anarchism (anarcho-syndicalism and anarcho-socialism). Both these deviations from the Marxist theory and tactics which dominate the labour movement are to be observed in various forms and various shades in all civilised countries throughout the history of the mass labour movement of over half a century.

This fact alone makes it clear that these deviations cannot be explained either by accidents, or errors on the part of individuals or groups, or even by the influence of national peculiarities or traditions, etc. There must be some fundamental causes within the economic system itself and in the character of the development of all capitalist countries which constantly breed these deviations. The little book by the Dutch Marxist, Anton Pannekoek, *The Tactical Differences in the Labour Movement* (*Die taktischen Differenzen in der Arbeiterbewegung*, Hamburg, Erdmann Dubber, 1909), published last year, represents an interesting attempt to explain these causes. We will, in our further exposition, acquaint the reader with the conclusions of Pannekoek, which one cannot help recognising as quite correct.

One of the deeper causes which give rise to the periodical differences in regard to tactics is the very fact of the growth of the labour movement. If this movement be measured not by the standard of some fantastic ideal, but considered as a practical movement of ordinary people, it will become clear that the continued enrollment of fresh "recruits" and the drawing in of new sections of the toiling masses must inevitably be accompanied by hesitations in theory and tactics, by the repetition of old mistakes and by the temporary return to obsolete views and methods, etc. The labour movement of every country periodically spends more or

less of its reserves of energy, attention and time on the "training" of recruits.

Further. The pace of development of capitalism is not the same in various countries and different spheres of national economy. Marxism is more easily, more quickly, more fully and firmly mastered by the working class and its ideologists in conditions of the greatest development of big industry. Economic relations which are backward or fall behind in their development constantly lead to the appearance of adherents of the labour movement who master only certain aspects of Marxism, only separate sections of the new world outlook, only separate slogans and demands, being incapable of breaking decisively with all the traditions of the bourgeois world outlook in general and the bourgeois-democratic world outlook in particular.

Then, a constant source of differences is provided by the dialectic nature of social development which proceeds in contradictions and by means of contradictions. Capitalism is progressive since it destroys the old methods of production and develops the productive forces and at the same time, at a certain stage of development, it delays the growth of these productive forces. It develops, organises and disciplines the workers; and it presses, oppresses, leads to degeneration, poverty, etc. Capitalism itself creates its own gravedigger, itself creates the elements of the new system and, at the same time, these elements, without a "leap," can change nothing in the general condition of things, cannot touch the domination of capital. Marxism, as a theory of dialectical materialism, is capable of embracing these contradictions of actual life, of the history of capitalism and the labour movement. But it is self-evident that the masses learn from life, and not from books, and consequently individuals and groups constantly exaggerate and raise to a one-sided theory and one-sided system of tactics now one, now another feature of capitalist development, now one, now another "lesson" of this development.

Bourgeois ideologists, liberals and democrats, who do not understand Marxism and the modern labour movement, are constantly jumping from one helpless extreme to another. Now they explain that it is all because wicked persons "incite" class against class, and now they console themselves that the workers' party is a "peaceful party of reform." Both anarcho-syndicalism and

reformism must be considered as the direct product of this bourgeois world outlook and influence. They both seize upon *one* side of the labour movement, raise this one-sidedness to a theory and declare as mutually exclusive such tendencies or features of the labour movement as form the specific peculiarity of one or other period, of one or other of the conditions of activity of the working class. But real life and real history *include* in themselves these various tendencies, just as life and development in nature include in themselves both slow evolution and rapid leaps, breaks in gradualness.

The revisionists consider as phrases, all arguments about "leaps" and about the principles underlying the antagonism of the labour movement to the old society. They accept reforms as a partial realisation of socialism. The anarcho-syndicalist rejects "petty work," particularly the utilisation of the parliamentary tribune. In practice these latter tactics amount to waiting for "big days" and exhibit an inability to gather the forces for creating big events. Both the revisionists and the anarcho-syndicalists hinder the most important and urgent business of uniting the workers in big, strong and well-functioning organisations, capable of functioning well under *all* circumstances, imbued with the spirit of the class struggle, clearly recognising their aims and trained in the real Marxian world outlook.

Here we will permit ourselves a small digression and remark, in parentheses, to avoid possible misunderstanding, that Pannekoek illustrates his analysis *exclusively* by examples from West European history, particularly from Germany and France, and has *absolutely not had* Russia in view. If it sometimes appears that he hints at Russia, this simply is due to the fact that the fundamental tendencies which give rise to definite deviations from Marxist tactics, also manifest themselves with us, notwithstanding the enormous distinction between Russia and the West, in point of culture, modes of life, and historical and economic differences.

Finally, an exceedingly important cause giving rise to differences between members of the labour movement is the changes in the tactics of the ruling classes in general and of the bourgeoisie in particular. If the tactics of the bourgeoisie were always uniform or at least homogeneous, the working class would have quickly learned to reply by equally uniform or homogeneous tactics. The

bourgeoisie in all countries in practice inevitably elaborates two systems of governing, two methods of struggle for its interests and for the defence of its domination, and these two methods now replace one another and now interlace in different combinations. These are, first, the method of violence, the method of refusing all concessions to the labour movement, the method of supporting all ancient and dying institutions, the method of uncompromising rejection of reforms. Such is the substance of conservative policy, which is more and more ceasing to be in Western Europe the policy of the landlord classes, and is ever more becoming one of the varieties of general bourgeois policy. The second method is the method of "liberalism," of steps towards the development of political rights, of reforms, of concessions, etc.

The bourgeoisie passes from one method to another not through the malicious design of individuals and not by accident, but by force of the basic contradictoriness of its own position. A normal capitalist society cannot successfully develop without a stabilised representative system, without certain political rights being granted to the population, which is necessarily distinguished by the comparatively high claims it presents with regard to "culture." This demand for a certain minimum of culture arises from the very conditions of the capitalist mode of production with its high technique, complexity, flexibility, mobility, rapidity of development of world competition, etc. In consequence of this, fluctuations in the tactics of the bourgeoisie and transitions from the system of violence to the system of would-be concessions are peculiar to the history of all European countries for the last half century, and various countries mainly develop the application of one or other method at definite periods. For instance, England in the sixties and seventies of the nineteenth century was the classical country of "liberal" bourgeois policy, Germany in the seventies and eighties kept to the method of force, etc.

When this method ruled in Germany, a one-sided echo of this system of bourgeois government was the growth in the labour movement of anarcho-syndicalism, or, as it was then called, anarchism (the "Young" in the beginning of the 'nineties, and Johann Most in the beginning of the 'eighties). When a turn towards "concessions" took place in 1890, this turn proved, as it always has done, even more dangerous for the labour movement,

since it gave rise to an equally one-sided echo of bourgeois "reformism": opportunism in the labour movement.

> "The positive aim of the liberal progressive policy of the bourgeoisie," says Pannekoek, "is to mislead the workers, to introduce a split in their ranks, to transform their politics into an impotent appendage of an impotent, always impotent and ephemeral, would-be reformism."

The bourgeoisie, not infrequently, attains its object, for a certain time, by means of a "liberal" policy which represents, according to the just remark of Pannekoek, a "more cunning" policy. A part of the workers and a part of their leaders allow themselves to be deceived by seeming concessions. The revisionists proclaim as "obsolete" the doctrine of the class struggle, or begin to carry on a policy which in fact renounces it. The zigzags of bourgeois tactics cause a strengthening of revisionism in the labour movement and not infrequently lead to differences within it to the point of a direct split.

All the causes of the kind indicated evoke differences in relation to the tactics within the labour movement and in the proletarian ranks. But there is not and there cannot be a Chinese wall between the proletariat and the adjacent sections of the petty bourgeoisie, including the peasantry. It is clear that the transition of individuals, groups, and sections of the petty bourgeoisie to the proletariat cannot but give rise, in its turn, to vacillations in the tactics of the latter.

The experience of the labour movement of various countries helps to elucidate the essence of Marxist tactics on concrete practical questions, and helps the younger countries to distinguish more clearly the true class significance of deviations from Marxism and more successfully to fight them.

December 1910.
V. I. Lenin, *Marx, Engels, Marxism,* pp. 80-84.

III. The Fight for a Marxist Party

In undertaking the publication of a political newspaper, *Iskra*,* we consider it necessary to say a few words about our aims and what we understand our tasks to be.

We are passing through an extremely important period in the history of the Russian labor movement and of Russian Social-Democracy.** The past few years have been marked by an astonishingly rapid spread of Social-Democratic ideas among our intelligentsia, and coming forward to meet this tendency of social ideas is the movement of the industrial proletariat, which arose independently, and which is beginning to unite and to fight against its oppressors, is beginning eagerly to strive toward socialism. Circles of workers and Social-Democratic intelligentsia are springing up everywhere; local agitation leaflets are beginning to be distributed, the demand for Social-Democratic literature is increasing and is far outstripping the supply, while the intensified persecution by the government is powerless to restrain this movement. The prisons and the places of exile are filled to overflowing. Hardly a month goes by without our hearing of Socialists being "discovered" in all parts of Russia, of the capture of literature carriers, and the confiscation of literature and printing presses—but the movement goes on and grows, spreads to a wider area, penetrates more and more deeply into the working class, and attracts increasing public attention to itself. The entire economic development of Russia, the history of the development

* *Iskra* (*Spark*) began publication in December 1900 with an editorial board led by Lenin and Plekhanov. Under Lenin's guidance *Iskra* became not only the militant, ideological center of proletarian socialism, but also the practical, organizing center around which the local Marxist organizations united.—*Ed.*

** During the Revolution of 1848 the Marxists called themselves Communists. After 1869, when the movement entered a new stage, the terms Socialist and Social-Democrat came into general usage. After the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, at Lenin's initiative, the original name of Communist Party was resumed by the revolutionary Marxists of the world.—*Ed.*

of social ideas in Russia and of the Russian revolutionary movement, serve as a guarantee that the Russian Social-Democratic labor movement will grow and ultimately surmount all the obstacles that confront it.

On the other hand, the principal feature of our movement, and one which has become particularly marked in recent times, is its state of disunity and its primitive character—if one may so express it. Local circles spring up and function independently of one another and (what is particularly important) even of circles which have functioned and now function simultaneously in the same district. Traditions are not established and continuity is not maintained; the local literature entirely reflects this disunity and lack of contact with what Russian Social-Democracy has already created.

This state of disunity runs counter to the requirements called forth by the strength and breadth of the movement, and this, in our opinion, marks a critical moment in its history. In the movement itself the need is strongly felt for consolidation and for definite form and organization; and yet many active Social-Democrats still fail to realize the need for the movement passing to a higher form. On the contrary, among wide circles an ideological wavering is observed, an absorption in the fashionable "criticism of Marxism" and "Bernsteinism," in spreading the views of the so-called "Economist" tendency and, what is inseparably connected with it, the effort to keep the movement at its lowest stage, an effort to push into the background the task of forming a revolutionary party to lead the struggle at the head of the whole people. *It is a fact* that such an ideological wavering is observed among Russian Social-Democrats, that narrow practical work carried on without a theoretical conception of the movement as a whole threatens to divert the movement to a false path. No one who has direct knowledge of the state of affairs in the majority of our organizations has any doubt whatever on that score. Moreover, literary productions exist which confirm this. It is sufficient to mention the *Credo* which has already evoked legitimate protest, the Special Supplement to *Rabochaya Mysl* (September 1899),* which brought out in such bold relief the tendency with which

* *Rabochaya Mysl* (*Workers' Thought*), a reformist, opportunist Socialist paper.—*Ed.*

Rabochaya Mysl is thoroughly imbued, and, finally, the Manifesto of the St. Petersburg Emancipation of the Working Class group,* drawn up in the spirit of this very Economism. The assertions made by *Rabocheye Dyelo* to the effect that the *Credo* merely represents the opinions of individuals, that the tendency represented by *Rabochaya Mysl* reflects merely the confusion of mind and the tactlessness of its editors, and not a special tendency in the progress of the Russian labor movement, *are absolutely untrue.***

Simultaneously with this, the works of authors whom the reading public has with more or less reason regarded up to now as the prominent representatives of "legal Marxism" more and more reveal a turn towards views approaching those of bourgeois apologists. As a result of all this, we have the confusion and anarchy which enabled the ex-Marxist, or, to speak more correctly, the ex-Socialist, Bernstein, in recounting his successes, to declare unchallenged in the press that the majority of Social-Democrats active in Russia were his followers.

We do not desire to exaggerate the danger of the situation, but it would be immeasurably more harmful to shut our eyes to it. That is why we welcome with all our heart the decision of the Emancipation of Labor group to resume its literary activity and commence a systematic struggle against the attempts to distort and vulgarize Social-Democracy.

The practical conclusion to be drawn from all this is as follows: we Russian Social-Democrats must combine and direct all our efforts towards the formation of a strong party that will fight under the united banner of revolutionary Social-Democracy. This is precisely the task that was outlined by the Congress in 1898, at which the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party was formed, and which published its Manifesto.

We regard ourselves as members of this Party; we entirely agree with the fundamental ideas contained in the Manifesto, and attach extreme importance to it as a public declaration of its aims.

* The Emancipation of the Working Class group was a small but influential organization. It arose in St. Petersburg in January 1899.—*Ed.*

** *Rabocheye Dyelo* (*Workers' Cause*), the organ of Economism, a trend of pure-and-simple trade unionism in the early Russian socialist movement.—*Ed.*

Consequently, for us, as members of the Party, the question as to what our immediate and direct tasks are presents itself as follows: what plan of activity must we adopt in order to revive the Party on the firmest possible basis?

The reply usually given to this question is that it is necessary to elect a central Party institution once more and to instruct that body to resume the publication of the Party organ. But in the confused period through which we are now passing such a simple method is hardly expedient.

To establish and consolidate the Party means establishing and consolidating unity among all Russian Social-Democrats, and, for the reasons indicated above, such unity cannot be brought about by decree; it cannot be brought about by, let us say, a meeting of representatives passing a resolution. Definite work must be done to bring it about. In the first place, it is necessary to bring about unity of ideas which will remove the differences of opinion and confusion that—we will be frank—reign among Russian Social-Democrats at the present time. This unity of ideas must be fortified by a unified Party program. Secondly, an organization must be set up especially for the purpose of maintaining contact among all the centres of the movement, for supplying complete and timely information about the movement, and for regularly distributing the periodical press to all parts of Russia. Only when we have built such an organization, only when we have created a Russian socialist mailing system, will the permanent existence of the Party be assured, only then will it become a real factor and, consequently, a mighty political force. To the first half of this task, *i.e.*, creating a common literature, consistent in principle and capable of ideologically uniting revolutionary Social-Democracy, we intend to devote our efforts, for we regard this as one of the pressing tasks of the present-day movement and a necessary preliminary measure towards the resumption of Party activity.

As we have already said, the intellectual unity of Russian Social-Democrats has still to be established, and in order to achieve this it is necessary, in our opinion, to have an open and thorough discussion of the fundamental principles and tactical questions raised by the present-day Economists, Bernsteinists and "critics." Before we can unite, and in order that we may unite, we must first of all firmly and definitely draw the lines of demarcation.

Otherwise, our unity will be merely a fictitious unity, which will conceal the prevailing confusion and prevent its complete elimination. Naturally, therefore, we do not intend to utilize our publication merely as a storehouse for various views. On the contrary, we shall conduct it along the lines of a strictly defined tendency. This tendency can be expressed by the word Marxism, and there is hardly need to add that we stand for the consistent development of the ideas of Marx and Engels, and utterly reject the half-way, vague and opportunistic emendations which have now become so fashionable as a result of the *légerdemain* of Ed. Bernstein, P. Struve and many others. But while discussing all questions from our own definite point of view, we shall not rule out of our columns polemics between comrades. Open polemics within the sight and hearing of all Russian Social-Democrats and class conscious workers are necessary and desirable, in order to explain the profound differences that exist, to obtain a comprehensive discussion of disputed questions, and to combat the extremes into which the representatives, not only of various views, but also of various localities or various "crafts" in the revolutionary movement, inevitably fall. As has already been stated, we also consider one of the drawbacks of the present-day movement to be the absence of open polemics among those holding avowedly differing views, an effort to conceal the differences that exist over extremely serious questions.

We shall not enumerate in detail all the question and themes included in the program of our publication, for this program automatically emerges from the general conception of what a political newspaper, published under present conditions, should be.

We shall exert every effort to persuade every Russian comrade to regard our publication as his own, as one to which every group should communicate information concerning the movement, in which to relate its experiences, express its views, its literature requirements, its opinions on Social-Democratic publications, in fact to make it the medium through which it can share with the other groups the contribution it makes to the movement and what it receives from it. Only in this way will it be possible to establish a genuinely all-Russian organ of Social-Democracy. Only such an organ will be capable of leading the movement onto the high

road of the political struggle. "Push out the framework and broaden the content of our propaganda, agitational and organizational activity"—these words uttered by P. B. Axelrod must serve as our slogan defining the activities of Russian Social-Democrats in the immediate future, and we adopt this slogan in the program of our organ.

We appeal not only to Socialists and class conscious workers; we also call upon all those who are oppressed by the present political system. We place the columns of our publication at their disposal in order that they may expose all the abominations of the Russian autocracy.

Those who regard Social-Democracy as an organization serving exclusively the spontaneous struggle of the proletariat may remain satisfied with merely local agitation and "pure and simple" labor literature. We do not regard Social-Democracy in this way; we regard it as a revolutionary party, inseparably linked up with the labor movement and directed against absolutism. Only when organized in such a party will the proletariat—the most revolutionary class in modern Russia—be in a position to fulfill the historical task that confronts it, namely, to unite under its banner all the democratic elements in the country and to crown the stubborn fight waged by a number of generations that have perished in the past with the final triumph over the hated regime.

The size of the newspaper will range from one to two printed signatures.* In view of the conditions under which the Russian underground press has to work, there will be no regular date of publication.

We have been promised contributions by a number of prominent representatives of international Social-Democracy, the close co-operation of the Emancipation of Labor group (G. V. Plekhanov, P. B. Axelrod and V. I. Zasulich), the support of several organizations of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party and also of separate groups of Russian Social-Democrats.

1901.

V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works,* "Declaration by the Editorial Board of *Iskra,*" Vol. I, 13-22.

* In referring to printed matter (books, pamphlets, magazines, etc.) Europeans always calculate on the basis of sixteen-page signatures instead of by the number of pages.—*Ed.*

IV. What Is "Freedom of Criticism"?

"Freedom of criticism," this undoubtedly is the most fashionable slogan at the present time, and the one most frequently employed in the controversies between the Socialists and democrats of all countries. At first sight, nothing would appear to be more strange than the solemn appeals, by one of the parties to the dispute, for freedom of criticism. Can it be that some of the advanced parties have raised their voices against the constitutional law of the majority of European countries which guarantees freedom to science and scientific investigation? "Something must be wrong here," an onlooker, who has not yet fully appreciated the nature of the disagreements among the controversialists, will say when he hears this fashionable slogan repeated at every cross-road. "Evidently this slogan is one of the conventional phrases which, like a nickname, becomes legitimized by use, and becomes almost a common noun," he will conclude.

In fact, it is no secret that two separate tendencies have been formed in international Social-Democracy.* The fight between these tendencies now flares up in a bright flame, and now dies

* Incidentally, this perhaps is the only occasion in the history of modern socialism in which controversies between various tendencies within the socialist movement have grown from national into international controversies; and this is extremely encouraging. Formerly, the disputes between the Lassalleans and the Eisenachers, between the Guesdists and the Possibilists, between the Fabians and the Social-Democrats, and between the Populists and the Social-Democrats, remained purely national disputes, reflected purely national features and proceeded, as it were, on different planes. At the present time (this is quite evident now), the English Fabians, the French Ministerialists, the German Bernsteinists (revisionists—*Ed.*), and the Russian "critics"—all belong to the same family, all extol each other, learn from each other, and are rallying their forces against "doctrinaire" Marxism. Perhaps in this first really international battle with socialist opportunism, international revolutionary Social-Democracy will become sufficiently strengthened to put an end to the political reaction that has long reigned in Europe.

down and smoulders under the ashes of imposing "resolutions for an armistice." What this "new" tendency, which adopts a "critical" attitude towards "obsolete doctrinaire" Marxism, represents has been *stated* with sufficient precision by Bernstein, and *demonstrated* by Millerand.

Social-Democracy must change from a party of the social revolution into a democratic party of social reforms. Bernstein has surrounded this political demand with a whole battery of symmetrically arranged "new" arguments and reasonings. The possibility of putting socialism on a scientific basis and of proving that it is necessary and inevitable from the point of view of the materialist conception of history was denied, as also were the facts of growing impoverishment and proletarianization and the intensification of capitalist contradictions. The very conception, *"ultimate aim,"* was declared to be unsound, and the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat was absolutely rejected. It was denied that there is any difference in principle between liberalism and socialism. *The theory of the class struggle* was rejected on the grounds that it could not be applied to a strictly democratic society, governed according to the will of the majority, etc.

Thus, the demand for a definite change from revolutionary Social-Democracy to bourgeois social-reformism was accompanied by a no less definite turn towards bourgeois criticism of all the fundamental ideas of Marxism. As this criticism of Marxism has been going on for a long time now, from the political platform, from university chairs, in numerous pamphlets and in a number of scientific works, as the younger generation of the educated classes has been systematically trained for decades on this criticism, it is not surprising that the "new, critical" tendency in Social-Democracy should spring up, all complete, like Minerva from the head of Jupiter. The content of this new tendency did not have to grow and develop, it was transferred bodily from bourgeois literature to socialist literature.

To proceed. If Bernstein's theoretical criticism and political yearnings are still obscure to anyone, the French have taken the trouble to demonstrate the "new method." In this instance, also, France has justified its old reputation as the country in which "more than anywhere else, the historical class struggles were each time fought out to a decision . . ." (Engels, in his introduc-

tion to Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire.*) The French Socialists have begun, not to theorise, but to act. The more developed democratic political conditions in France have permitted them to put Bernsteinism into practice immediately, with all its consequences. Millerand has provided an excellent example of practical Bernsteinism; not without reason did Bernstein and Vollmar rush so zealously to defend and praise him! Indeed, if Social-Democracy, in essence, is merely a reformist party, and must be bold enough to admit this openly, then not only has a Socialist the right to join a bourgeois cabinet, it is even his duty always to strive to do so. If democracy, in essence, means the abolition of class domination, then why should not a Socialist minister charm the whole bourgeois world by orations on class co-operation? Why should he not remain in the cabinet even after the shooting down of workers by gendarmes has exposed, for the hundredth and thousandth time, the real nature of the democratic co-operation of classes? Why should he not personally take part in welcoming the tsar, for whom the French Socialists now have no other sobriquet than "Hero of the Knout, Gallows and Banishment" (*knouteur, pendeur at déportateur*)? And the reward for this utter humiliation and self-degradation of socialism in the face of the whole world, for the corruption of the socialist consciousness of the working class—the only basis that can guarantee our victory—the reward for this is imposing *plans* for niggardly reforms, so niggardly in fact that much more has been obtained from bourgeois governments!

He who does not deliberately close his eyes cannot fail to see that the new "critical" tendency in socialism is nothing more nor less than a new species of *opportunism.* And if we judge people not by the brilliant uniforms they deck themselves in, not by the imposing appellations they give themselves, but by their actions, and by what they actually advocate, it will be clear that "freedom of criticism" means freedom for an opportunistic tendency in Social-Democracy, the freedom to convert Social-Democracy into a democratic reformist party, the freedom to introduce bourgeois ideas and bourgeois elements into socialism.

"Freedom" is a grand word, but under the banner of free trade the most predatory wars were conducted; under the banner of free labour, the toilers were robbed. The modern use of

the term "freedom of criticism" contains the same inherent falsehood. Those who are really convinced that they have advanced science would demand, not freedom for the new views to continue side by side with the old, but the substitution of the new views for the old. The cry "Long live freedom of criticism," that is heard today, too strongly calls to mind the fable of the empty barrel.

We are marching in a compact group along a precipitous and difficult path, firmly holding each other by the hand. We are surrounded on all sides by enemies, and are under their almost constant fire. We have combined voluntarily, precisely for the purpose of fighting the enemy, and not to retreat into the adjacent marsh, the inhabitants of which, from the very outset, have reproached us with having separated ourselves into an exclusive group and with having chosen the path of struggle instead of the path of conciliation. And now several among us begin to cry out: let us go into this marsh! And when we begin to shame them, they retort: how conservative you are! Are you not ashamed to deny us the right to invite you to take a better road! Oh yes, gentlemen! You are free not only to invite us, but to go yourselves wherever you will, even into the marsh. In fact, we think that the marsh is your proper place, and we are prepared to render *you* every assistance to get there. Only let go of our hands, don't clutch at us and don't besmirch the grand word "freedom"; for we too are "free" to go where we please, free not only to fight against the marsh, but also against those who are turning towards the marsh.

. . . The question now arises: seeing what the peculiar features of Russian "criticism" and Russian Bernsteinism were, what should those who desired to oppose opportunism, in deeds and not merely in words, have done? First of all, they should have made efforts to resume the theoretical work that was only just begun in the period of "legal Marxism," and that has now again fallen on the shoulders of the illegal workers. Unless such work is undertaken the successful growth of the movement is impossible. Secondly, they should have actively combated legal "criticism" that was greatly corrupting people's minds. Thirdly, they should have actively counteracted the confusion and vacillation prevailing in practical work, and should have exposed and

repudiated every conscious or unconscious attempt to degrade our programme and tactics.

That *Rabocheye Dyelo* did none of these things is a well-known fact, and further on we shall deal with this well-known fact from various aspects. At the moment, however, we desire merely to show what a glaring contradiction there is between the demand for "freedom of criticism" and the peculiar features of our native criticism and Russian Economism. Indeed, glance at the text of the resolution by which the League of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad endorsed the point of view of *Rabocheye Dyelo.*

> In the interests of the further ideological development of Social-Democracy, we recognise the freedom to criticise Social-Democratic theory in Party literature to be absolutely necessary in so far as this criticism does not run counter to the class and revolutionary character of this theory. (*Two Congresses,* p. 10.)

And what is the argument behind this resolution? The resolution "in its first part coincides with the resolution of the Lübeck Party Congress on Bernstein. . . ." In the simplicity of their souls the "Leaguers" failed to observe the *testimonium pauper-tatis* (certificate of poverty) they give themselves by this piece of imitativeness! . . . "But . . . in its second part, it restricts freedom of criticism much more than did the Lübeck Party Congress."

So the League's resolution was directed against Russian Bernsteinism? If it was not, then the reference to Lübeck is utterly absurd! But it is not true to say that it "restricts freedom of criticism." In passing their Hanover resolutions, the Germans, point by point, rejected *precisely the amendments* proposed by Bernstein, while in their Lübeck resolution they cautioned *Bernstein personally,* and named him in the resolution. Our "free" imitators, however, *do not make a single reference to a single manifestation* of Russian "criticism" and Russian Economism and, in view of this omission, the bare reference to the class and revolutionary character of the theory leaves exceedingly wide scope for misinterpretation, particularly when the League refuses to identify "so-called Economism" with opportunism. (*Two Con-*

gresses, p. 8, par. 1.) But all this *en passant.* The important thing to note is that the opportunist attitude towards revolutionary Social-Democrats in Russia is the very opposite of that in Germany. In Germany, as we know, revolutionary Social-Democrats are in favour of preserving what is: they stand in favour of the old programme and tactics which are universally known, and after many decades of experience have become clear in all their details. The "critics" desire to introduce changes, and as these critics represent an insignificant minority, and as they are very shy and halting in their revisionist efforts, one can understand the motives of the majority in confining themselves to the dry rejection of "innovations." In Russia, however, it is the "critics" and Economists who are in favour of preserving what is: the "critics" wish us to continue to regard them as Marxists, and to guarantee them the "freedom of criticism" which they enjoyed to the full (for, as a matter of fact, they never recognised any kind of *Party* ties,* and, moreover, we never had a generally recognised Party organ which could "restrict" freedom of criticism even by giving advice); the Economists want the revolutionaries to recognise the "competency of the present movement" (*Rabocheye Dyelo,* No. 10, p. 25), *i.e.,* to recognise the "legitimacy" of what exists; they do not want the "ideologists" to try to "divert" the movement from the path that "is determined by the interaction of material elements and material environment" (Letter published in *Iskra,* No. 12); they want

* The absence of public Party ties and Party traditions by itself marks such a cardinal difference between Russia and Germany that it should have warned all sensible Socialists against being blindly imitative. But here is an example of the lengths to which "freedom of criticism" goes in Russia. Mr. Bulgakov, the Russian critic, utters the following reprimand to the Austrian critic, Hertz: "Notwithstanding the independence of his conclusions, Hertz, on this point [on co-operative societies] apparently remains tied by the opinions of his party, and although he disagrees with it in details, he dare not reject common principles." (*Capitalism and Agriculture,* Vol. II, p. 287.) The subject of a politically enslaved state, in which nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand of the population are corrupted to the marrow of their bones by political subservience, and completely lack the conception of Party honour and Party ties, superciliously reprimands a citizen of a constitutional state for being excessively "tied by the poinion of his party"! Our illegal organisations have nothing else to do, of course, but draw up resolutions about freedom of criticism. . . .

recognition "for the only struggle that the workers can conduct under present conditions," which in their opinion is the struggle "which they are actually conducting at the present time." (Special Supplement to *Rabochaya Mysl*, p. 14.) We revolutionary Social-Democrats, on the contrary, are dissatisfied with this worshipping of spontaneity, *i.e.*, worshipping what is "at the present time"; we demand that the tactics that have prevailed in recent years be changed; we declare that "before we can unite, and in order that we may unite, we must first of all firmly and definitely draw the lines of demarcation." (See announcement of the publication of *Iskra*.*) In a word, the Germans stand for what is and reject the changes; we demand changes, and reject subservience to and conciliation with what is.

This "little" difference our "free" copyists of German resolutions failed to notice!

1901-2.
V. I. Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?* pp. 12-14.

* See p. 19 in this volume.—*Ed.*

V. Opportunism in Questions of Organization

It is well worth noting that these fundamental characteristics of opportunism on organisational questions (autonomism, gentleman's or intellectuals anarchism, *khvostism* and Girondism) are, *mutatis mutandis,* observed in all the Social-Democratic Parties all over the world, wherever the Party is divided into a revolutionary wing and an opportunist wing (and what Party is not thus divided?). Quite recently this came to light in a particularly striking way in the German Social-Democratic Party, when its defeat at the election in the twentieth electoral division of Saxony (the Göhre* incident") raised the question of the *principles* of the Party organisation. That this should have become an issue of principle was mainly due to the zeal of the German opportunists. Göhre, an ex-parson, the author of the well-known book *Drei Monate Fabrikarbeiter* and one of the "heroes" of the Dresden Congress, was an extreme opportunist, and the *Sozialistische Monatshefte,* the organ of the consistent German opportunists, at once "intervened" in his favour.

Opportunism in programme matters is naturally connected with opportunism is tactics and opportunism in matters of organisation. Comrade Wolfgang Heine undertook to expound the "new" point of view. To give the reader an idea of the political complexion of this typical intellectual, who joined the Social-Democratic movement and brought with him opportunist habits of thinking, it will be sufficient to say that Comrade Wolfgang Heine is a little less than a German Comrade Akimov and a little more than a German Comrade Egorov.

* Göhre was returned to the Reichstag on June 16, 1903, in the fifteenth division of Saxony, but resigned after the Dresden Congress; the electors of the twentieth division, which had been made vacant by the death of Rosonow, wanted to offer the candidature to Göhre. The Central Council of the Party and the Central Agitation Committee for Saxony opposed this, and although they were not formally entitled to annul the candidature of Göhre, they succeeded in obtaining his withdrawal. At the polls the Social-Democrats were defeated.

Comrade Wolfgang Heine took the warpath in *Sozialistische Monatshefte* with no less a flourish of trumpets than Comrade Axelrod in the new *Iskra*. The title of his article itself is priceless: "Democratic Observations on the Göhre Incident." (*Sozialistische Monatshefte,* April, No. 4.) The contents are no less thundering. Comrade W. Heine protests against all "encroachments upon the autonomy of the constituency," champions the "democratic principle," and protests against the intervention of the "higher authority" (*i.e.,* of the Central Council of the Party) in the free election of deputies by the people. The point at issue, says Comrade Heine didactically, is not a casual incident, but *"a general tendency towards bureaucracy and centralism in the Party,"* a trend, he says, which might have been observed before, but which is now becoming particularly dangerous. We must "recognise the principle that the local institutions of the Party as the vehicles of Party life" (this is a plagiarism of Martov's pamphlet "Once Again a Minority"). We must not "get accustomed to having all important political decisions emanating from one centre," we must warn the Party against "a doctrinaire policy that loses contact with life" (taken from Comrade Martov's speech at the Party Congress to the effect that "life will have its own way"). Comrade Heine proceeds to deepen his argument: ". . . If we look into the roots of things, if we abstract ourselves from personal conflicts which in this case, as always, played no small part, we shall find that this bitterness against the *revisionists* [the italics are the author's, who is evidently hinting at the distinction between fighting revisionism and fighting the revisionists] expresses most of all the distrust the Party officials entertain towards *'outsiders'* [evidently, Heine has not yet read the pamphlet about the state of siege in our Party and is reduced to using an Anglicism—"outsidertum"], the distrust that tradition has for everything unfamiliar, that the impersonal institution has for everything individual [see the resolution moved by Axelrod at the Congress of the League on the suppression of individual initiative], in a word, that very tendency which we have defined as a tendency towards bureaucracy and centralism in the Party."

The idea of "discipline" arouses in Comrade Heine the same noble indignation that it does in Comrade Axelrod. . . . "The

revisionists," he writes, " have been accused of lack of discipline for having written for the *Sozialistische Monatshefte,* the Social-Democratic character of which they even questioned on the ground that it is not *controlled by the Party.* This attempt to narrow the concept 'Social-Democratic,' this insistence on *discipline* in the sphere of ideological production, where complete freedom must reign [*cf.* ideological struggle is a process, while forms of organisation are only forms], are sufficient evidence of a trend towards bureaucracy and towards the suppression of individuality."

And Heine goes on for quite a long time fulminating against this hateful tendency to make *"one* all-embracing great organisation as centralised as possible, *one* set of tactics and *one* theory," and he fulminates against the insistence on "absolute obedience," "blind submission," against "vulgarised centralism," etc., etc., literally *"à la* Axelrod."

The controversy raised by W. Heine spread further; and as there were no squabbles about co-optation to obscure the issue in the German Party and as the German Akimovs have the opportunity of revealing their countenances in a permanent journal of their own and not only at congresses—the controversy soon reached the stage of analysing the tendencies of the principle of orthodoxy and revisionism in matters of organisation. K. Kautsky came out (in *Die Neue Zeit,* 1904, No. 28, in an article *"Wahlkreis und Partei"* ["The Constituency and the Party"] as one of the spokesmen of the revolutionary wing (which, exactly as in our Party is, of course, accused of "dictatorship," and of "inquisitorial" tendencies and other dreadful things.* "W. Heine's article," wrote Kautsky, "reveals the mode

* Karl Kautsky was the leading exponent of orthodox Marxism in Germany and led the struggle against revisionism at the time Bernstein's book appeared in 1899. Kautsky's fight against the revisionists, however, was characterized by vacillation and a non-Marxist approach on such fundamental questions as the dictatorship of the proletariat, the proletarian revolution and the state. By 1903, it became clear that Kautsky was conciliating the opportunists and shielding them against the attacks of the Left Wing of Social Democracy. It was no accident, therefore, that with the outbreak of the First World War, he merged completely with the opportunists in support of the German imperialists. Kautsky was also among the most rabid opponents of the October Revolution.—*Ed.*

of thinking of the whole revisionist school." In France and in Italy, as well as in Germany, the opportunists are all for autonomism, for a slackening of Party discipline, for reducing it to nought; in all countries these tendencies lead to disruption and to the distortion of the "democratic principle" into *anarchism*. Giving the opportunists a lesson in matters of organisation, K. Kautsky says:

> Democracy is not the absence of authority, democracy is not anarchy, it is control exercised by the masses over their representatives, as distinct from other forms of government under which the supposed servants of the people are in actual fact its masters.

K. Kautsky traces in detail the disruptive role of opportunist autonomism in the different countries and shows that it is precisely the adherence of *"a number of bourgeois elements"* to Social-Democracy* that gives strength to opportunism, to autonomism and to the tendency to violate discipline. He reminds us again and again that "organisation is the weapon with which the proletariat will win its freedom," and that "organisation is a characteristically proletarian weapon in the class struggle."

In Germany, where opportunism is weaker than in France or in Italy,

> autonomist tendencies have up to the present only resulted in more or less high-flown declamations against dictators and great inquisitors, against anathemas** and heresy hunting, in endless cavilling and squabbling that would, if the other side replied to it, only result in endless quarrels.

It is not surprising that in Russia, where opportunism in the Party is even weaker than in Germany, autonomist trends should have produced fewer ideas and more "high-flown declamations" and squabbling.

* As an example K. Kautsky mentions Jaurès. To the extent that they deviate to opportunism people of this type "begin to consider Party discipline an intolerable constraint on their free personality."

** *Bannstrahl*: anathema. This is the German equivalent of the Russian "state of siege" and "the exceptional laws." It is the "frightful word" of the German opportunists.

It is not surprising that Kautsky arrives at the following conclusion:

> There is probably no other issue on which the revisionism of different countries, in spite of all its varieties and different shades, is so completely uniform as on the question of organisation.

To define the tendencies of the principles of orthodoxy and of revisionism in this sphere, Kautsky, too, makes use of a "frightful phrase," *viz.*, bureaucracy *versus* democracy. "We are told," he writes, "that allowing the Party leadership to influence the selection of a candidate (for parliament) by the constituencies would be a 'shameful violation of the democratic principle, which demands that all political activity proceed from the bottom upwards, from the independent activity of the masses, and not from the top downwards by bureaucratic means....' But if there is a democratic principle, it is that the majority must have its way against the minority and not the other way round...."

The election of a member of parliament by a constituency is an important question for the Party as a whole, and the Party must influence the nomination of a candidate, if only through the medium of the Party's representatives (*Vertrauensmänner*).

> Let those who consider this to be too bureaucratic or too centralistic suggest that candidates be nominated by a vote of the whole Party membership (*sämmtlicher Parteigenossen*). He who thinks this is not practicable has no right to complain of a deficiency of democratic principle when the function, like many other functions of the Party, is exercised by one or by several Party organs.

In accordance with the "common law" of the German Party the local constituencies used to "come to a friendly agreement" with the Party leadership about the choice of a candidate. "But the Party has grown too large for this tacit common law to suffice any longer. Common law ceases to be a rule when it ceases to be recognised as something self-evident, when its stipulations, or even its very existence, are *called in question.* Then it becomes absolutely necessary to formulate the law, to codify

it," to adopt a more "precise statutory definition* (*statutarische Festlegung*) and thus increase the strictness (*grössere Straffheit*) of the organisation."

So here you have, in different surroundings, the same struggle between the opportunist wing and the revolutionary wing of the Party on the question of organisation, the same conflict between autonomism and centralism, between democracy and "bureaucracy," between a tendency to relax and a tendency to tighten up the strictness of organisation and of discipline, between the mentality of the unstable intellectual and the tempered proletarian, between intellectual individualism and proletarian cohesion. We may ask, what was the attitude of *bourgeois democracy* to all this conflict, not the attitude of bourgeois democracy which frolicsome history has only promised to show privately to Comrade Axelrod one day, but the actual, real bourgeois democracy which in Germany has spokesmen who are quite as learned and quite as keen observers as our own gentlemen of *Osvobozhdeniye*? German bourgeois democracy at once responded to the new controversy and unanimously took the side of the opportunist wing of the Social-Democratic Party—just as Russian bourgeois democracy would do, and as has always been done in every other country. *Die Frankfurter Zeitung*, a leading organ of the German Stock Exchange, in its evening edition (April 7, 1902), published a furious leading article which shows that the shameless plagiarism of Comrade Axelrod is becoming quite a disease in the German press. The stern democrats of the Frankfort Stock Exchange scourge "autocracy" in the Social-Democratic Party, "Party dictatorship," "the autocratic domination of the Party officials," these "anathemas" which are intended "as it were, to chastise revisionism as a whole" (*cf.* "the false charge of opportunism"), the insistence on "blind submission," the transforming of members of the Party into "political corpses" (this is somewhat stronger

* It would be very instructive to compare Kautsky's remarks on the transition from tacitly recognised common law to the formal, fixed statutory law with all the "changes" our Party, in general, and the editorial board, in particular, has undergone since the Party Congress. See the report of the speech by Vera Zasulich (at the Congress of the League, p. 66 *et sup.*), who does not seem to realise the significance of the changes that are taking place.*

language than "cogwheels and screws"). The indignation of the knights of the Stock Exchange is aroused by the sight of the undemocratic state of affairs in the Social-Democratic Party: "All personal originality," all individuality must be persecuted, because they threaten to bring about the French state of affairs, Jaurèsism and Millerandism, as was stated in so many words by Zindermann, who reported on the question at the Party Congress of the Saxon Social-Democrats.

Thus, as far as the new catchwords of the new *Iskra* on the question of organisation have any general meaning at all there cannot be any doubt that they have an opportunist meaning. This conclusion is confirmed by the results of our analysis of the Party Congress, which divided into a revolutionary wing and an oportunist wing, and by the example of *all* the Social-Democratic Parties of Western Europe where opportunism in the question of organisation found expression in the same tendencies, in the same accusations and very often even in the same catchwords. Of course, the national peculiarities of the individual parties and the different political conditions in the different countries will leave their impress and make German opportunism unlike French opportunism, French opportunism unlike Italian opportunism and Italian opportunism unlike Russian opportunism. But the uniformity of the fundamental division of all these Parties into a revolutionary wing and an opportunist wing, the uniformity of the argument and tendencies of opportunism in questions of organisation stand out clearly in spite of all this difference of conditions.* The multitude

* No one has any doubt today that the old division of Russian Social-Democracy on questions of tactics into Economists and politicians was uniform with the division of the whole of Social-Democracy into opportunists and revolutionaries, although the difference between Comrades Martynov and Akimov on the one hand, and between Comrades von Vollmar and von Elm, on the other, or Jaurès and Millerand, is very great. Nor will anyone doubt the similarity in the main divisions on the organisational question, in spite of the enormous difference between the conditions of politically disfranchised and politically free countries. It is extremely characteristic that the highly principled editors of *Iskra*, in briefly touching on the controversy between Kautsky and Heine (No. 64), timidly *evaded* the question of the tendencies of *principles* of *all* opportunism and of orthodoxy on the organisational question.

of representatives of the radical intelligentsia in the ranks of our Marxists and of our Social-Democrats has been making the presence of opportunism inevitable, for it is produced by the mentality of the radical intellectual in the most varied spheres and in the most varied forms. We have fought opportunism on the fundamental problems of our conception of the world, on questions of our programme, and complete divergence of aims has inevitably led to an irrevocable separation between the Social-Democrats and the liberals who had corrupted our legal Marxism. We have fought opportunism on tactical questions, and our differences with Comrades Krichevsky and Akimov on these less important questions were naturally only temporary, and were not followed by the formation of separate parties. We must now overcome the opportunism of Martov and Axelrod on organisational questions, which, of course, are still less fundamental than questions of programme and tactics, but which have now come to the forefront of the stage in our Party life.

When speaking of fighting opportunism, there is a characteristic feature of present-day opportunism in every sphere that must never be overlooked: this is its vagueness, its diffuseness, its elusiveness. The very nature of the opportunist is such that he will always try to avoid formulating the issue clearly and irrevocably; he will always try to find the resultant force, will always wriggle like a snake between two mutually excluding points of view, he will try to "agree" with both and reduce his differences of opinion to slight amendments, doubts, innocently good intentions, etc., etc. Comrade Eduard Bernstein, an opportunist on questions of programme, "agrees" with the revolutionary programme of the Party; and although he is anxious, no doubt, to see it "radically reformed," he thinks it would be inopportune and inexpedient and that it is more important to bring out "general principles" and "criticism" (which is mainly the uncritical borrowing of the principles and catchwords of bourgeois democracy). Comrade von Vollmar, an opportunist on tactical questions, is also in complete agreement with the old tactics of revolutionary Social-Democracy and also confines himself mainly to declamations, to petty amendments, to sneers; he never *openly* advocates definitely "ministerialist" tactics. The opportunists on organisational questions, Comrades Martov and

Axelrod, have also up to the present failed to produce, though challenged to do so, any definite statement of principles that could be fixed in "a statutory way"; they, too, would like, certainly they would like a "radical reform" of our organisational rules (*Iskra,* No. 58,* p. 2, col. 3), but they would prefer to devote themselves first to "general problems of organisation" (because a really radical reform of our rules, which in spite of point 1 is after all a centralist one, would inevitably lead, if it were carried out in the spirit of the new *Iskra,* to autonomism; and Comrade Martov, of course, does not like admitting even to himself that, *in principle,* his tendency is towards antonomism). "In principle," their attitude towards the organisational question displays all the colours of the rainbow: the predominant note is the innocent, pathetic declamations about autocracy and bureaucracy, about blind obedience, about cogwheels and screws—declamations which sound so innocent that it requires no small effort to discern in them what is really concerned with principle and what is really concerned with co-optation. But the deeper the

* It will now be fully apparent to those who remember the debate on point 1 that the mistake committed by Comrade Martov and Comrade Axelrod on point 1 *inevitably* leads, when developed and deepened, to organisational opportunism. Comrade Martov's initial idea, self-registration of Party members, is nothing else than false "democracy," the idea of building the Party from the bottom upwards. My idea, on the other hand, is "bureaucratic" in the sense that the Party is built from the top downwards, from the Party Congress to the individual Party organisations. The mentality of the bourgeois intellectual, anarchist phrases, opportunist, *khvostist* profundity—all these were already discerned in the debate on point 1. Comrade Martov says that "new ideas are beginning to be worked out" by the new *Iskra.* This is true in the sense that, beginning with point 1, he and Comrade Axelrod have been really advancing thought in a new direction. The one thing wrong is that it is an opportunist direction. The more they "work" in *this* direction the deeper will they get stuck in the mire. This was clear to Comrade Plekhanov at the Party Congress and in his article "What Should Not Be Done?" he warned them once again: I am prepared even to co-opt you, but for goodness' sake do not continue along this road which can only bring you to opportunism and anarchism. Martov and Axelrod did not follow the good advice: "What? Are we to turn back? agree with Lenin that this co-optation was only a squabble? Never! We will show him that we are men of principle!"—and so they have. They have shown everyone that in so far as they have any new principles, they are the principles of opportunism.

woods the thicker the trees: attempts to analyse and give a precise definition of the hated "bureaucracy" inevitably lead to autonomism, attempts to "deepen" and to vindicate inevitably lead to a justification of backwardness, to *khvostism*, to Girondist phrases. At last, as the only really definite principle, which in practice, consequently, stands out with particular relief (practice is always in advance of theory), there emerges the principle of *anarchism*. Sneering at discipline—autonomism—anarchism—these are the stairs our organisational opportunism alternately climbs and descends, jumping from step to step and skillfully evading any definite statement of its principles. Opportunism in questions of programme and tactics displays exactly the same stages—sneering at "orthodoxy," narrowness and immobility—revisionist "criticism" and ministerialism—bourgeois democracy.

In close psychological connection with their hatred of discipline there is an incessant, whining note of disgruntledness, which can be deteced in all the writings of all contemporary opportunists in general, and of our minority in particular. They are always being persecuted, restricted, kicked out, besieged and bullied. These catchwords contain much more psychological and political truth than the author of the pleasant and witty joke about bullies and bullied probably suspected. For, indeed, you have only to take the minutes of our Party Congress to see that the minority includes all those who took offense, all those who for one reason or another were offended by revolutionary Social-Democracy. It includes the Bundists and the *Rabocheye Dyelo*-ists whom we kept on "offending" until they withdrew from the Congress; the *Yuzhny Rabochy*-ists, who were mortally offended by the suppression of all separate organisations in general and of their own in particular; Comrade Makhov who was offended each time he took the floor (because every time he did so he made a point of disgracing himself); and finally, Comrades Martov and Axelrod were offended because they were "falsely accused of opportunism" in connection with point 1 of the rules and because they were defeated in the ballot. All these mortal offences were not the accidental outcome of bad jokes, violent behaviour, furious polemics, slamming of doors and shaking of fists as so many philistines still imagine, but the inevitble political result of the three years of ideological work

that *Iskra* had carried on. If in the whole course of these three years we not only wagged our tongues but gave expression to convictions that had to lead to action, we could not avoid fighting the anti-*Iskra*-ists and the "Marsh" at the Congress. And since we, together with Comrade Martov, who fought in the front line with vizor raised, had offended such a lot of people—we had only to offend Comrade Axelrod and Comrade Martov just the tiniest bit for the cup to overflow. Quantity was transformed into quality. The negation was negated. All the offended forgot their mutual squabbles, fell weeping into each other's arms, and raised the banner of "revolt against Leninism."*

A revolt is an excellent thing when it is the advanced elements that revolt against the reactionary elements. It is a good thing when the revolutionary wing revolts against the opportunist wing. But it is a bad thing when the opportunist wing revolts against the revolutionary wing.

Comrade Plekhanov is compelled to take part in this dirty business in the capacity of a prisoner of war, as it were. He tries to "vent his feelings" by fishing out isolated clumsy phrases written by authors of resolutions in favour of the "majority" and exclaims as he does so: "Poor Comrade Lenin! What fine orthodox supporters he has!" (*Iskra,* No. 63, supplement.)

Well, Comrade Plekhanov, I can only say that if I am poor, the editors of the new *Iskra* are downright paupers. However poor I may be I have not yet sunk to such utter destitution as to have to shut my eyes to the Party Congress and hunt for material to exercise my wit on in the resolutions of committeemen. However poor I may be I am a thousand times better off than those whose supporters do not inadvertently utter a clumsy phrase but on all issues, whether of organisation, of tactics or of programme, zealously and steadily advocate principles which are opposed to the principles of revolutionary Social-Democracy. However poor I may be I have not yet reached the stage where I have to *conceal from the public* the praise lavished on me by such supporters. But the editors of *Iskra* have to do this.

* This amazing expression is Comrade Martov's (*The State of Siege,* p. 68). Comrade Martov waited till they were five strong to raise the "revolt" against my single self. Comrade Martov is not a skilful polemist: he wants to destroy his opponent by paying him the greatest compliments.

Reader, do you know what the Voronezh Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. is? If you do not, read the minutes of the Party Congress. You will discover that the line of that committee is adequately expressed by Comrade Akimov and Comrade Brooker who at the Congress fought the revolutionary wing of our Party all along the line, and who have been ranked as opportunists scores of times by everybody, from Comrade Plekhanov to Comrade Popov.

Well, this Voronezh Committee, in its January leaflet (No. 12, January 1904),) makes the following statement:

> Last year a great and important event took place in our continually growing Party: the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P., a congress of the representatives of its organisations, was held. Convening a congress is a very complicated business, and under monarchist conditions it is a dangerous, a difficult business. Consequently, it is not surprising that the business was carried out *in a far from perfect way,* and that the Congress itself, although it passed off quite successfully, did not fulfill all the Party's expectations. The comrades whom the Conference of 1902 commissioned to convene the Congress were arrested, and *the Congress was organised by persons who represented one of the trends in Russian Social-Democracy, viz., the "Iskra"*-ists. *Many* Social-Democratic organisations other than *Iskra* were not invited to take part in the work of the Congress; *this is one of the reasons why* the task of drawing up a *programme and rules* for the Party was carried out by the Congress in an *extremely imperfect way;* the delegates themselves admit that the rules contain important omissions 'which may result in dangerous misunderstandings.' The *Iskra*-ists themselves split at the Congress, and many prominent workers in our R.S.D.L.P., who hitherto had appeared to be fully in agreement with the *Iskra* programme of action, have admitted that many of its views, which were supported *mainly by Lenin and Plekhanov,* are impractical. Although the latter got the upper hand at the Congress, the mistakes of the theoreticians were soon corrected by the forces of real life and the demands of real work in which all non-*Iskra*-ists also take part, and after the Congress important amendments were introduced.

"Iskra" has undergone a profound change and promises to give careful attention to the demands of workers in the Social-Democratic movement in general. Thus, although *the work of this Congress will have to be revised* at the next congress, and, as is obvious to the delegates, was unsatisfactory, and *therefore cannot be accepted by the Party as unimpeachable decisions,* the Congress has cleared up the situation inside the Party, has collected much material for the theoretical and organisational work of the Party, and has been an immensely instructive experience for the work of the Party in general. The decisions of the Congress and the rules drawn up by it will be *taken into account* by all the organisations, but in view of their obvious imperfections, many will not be *guided exclusively by them.*

"Realising the importance of the common work of the Party, the Vonorezh Committee has actively *responded* to all the questions concerning the organisation of the Congress. It recognises the importance of what took place at the Congress and *welcomes the change undergone by 'Iskra,'* which has become the central organ. Although the state of affairs in the Party and in the central organ does not *yet* satisfy us, we trust that with a common effort the difficult work of organising the Party will be made more perfect. In view of false rumours, the Voronezh Committee informs the comrades that there can be no question of the Voronezh Committee withdrawing from the Party. The Voronezh Committee realises perfectly well what a dangerous precedent might be created by the withdrawal of a workers' organisation like the Voronezh Committee from the R.S.D.L.P., what *a reproach this would be to the Party,* and of what disadvantage this would be to workers' organisations which might follow our example. We must not cause new splits but must strive persistently to unite all class conscious workers and Socialists in a single party. Besides, the Second Congress was not an inaugural congress but an ordinary congress. Expulsion from the Party can only take place on the decision of a Party court, and no organisation, not even the Central Committee, has the right to expel any Social-Democratic organisation from the Party. What is more, the Second Congress passed point 8 of the rules, which

makes every organisation autonomous (independent) in its local affairs, and this entitles *the Voronezh Committee to put its organisational views into practice and advocate them in the Party.*"

The editors of the new *Iskra,* in quoting this leaflet, in No. 61, reprinted the second half of what we have quoted and which is here printed in italics; as for the first half, which is here printed in small type, the editors *preferred to leave it out.*

They were ashamed.

February-March 1904.
V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works,* Vol. II, pp. 448-54.

VI. Inherent Contradictions of Party Development

First, the question of the struggle inside our Party. The struggle did not commence yesterday, nor has it ended yet. If we take the history of our Party from the time it came into being as a group of Bolsheviks in the year 1903, and if we examine its latest stages right up to the present time, then it can be stated without any exaggeration that the history of our Party is the history of the struggle of contradictions within this Party, a history of the overcoming of these contradictions and of the gradual consolidation of our Party on the basis of overcoming these contradictions. It may be said that the Russians are too quarrelsome, that they love polemics, that they create differences and for that reason the development of the Russian Party is a process of overcoming internal Party antagonisms. This would not be true, comrades. This is not a matter of being quarrelsome; it is a matter of differences over principles, arising in the process of the development of the Party and the process of the struggle of the proletariat.

It means that antagonisms can only be overcome by the struggle for this or that principle, for this or that fighting aim, for this or that method of struggle which leads to the goal. One can and must enter into every kind of compromise with those of a like mind within the Party on questions of current politics, on questions of a purely practical nature. But when these questions are bound up with differences of opinion involving principles, then no compromise, no "middle" line can save matters. There is not and cannot be a "middle" line in questions involving principles. Either the one or the other principle must be made the basis of the work of the Party. A "middle" line on questions involving principles is a "line" which leads to confusion of mind, a line which glosses over differences, a line of ideological degeneration of the Party, a line of ideological death of the Party.

How do the Social-Democratic parties in the West live and develop? Are there any internal contradictions and differences over principles in those parties? Of course there are. Do they expose these contradictions and try to overcome them honestly and frankly before the eyes of the masses of the party? No, of course they do not. It is the practice of the Social-Democrats to conceal these antagonisms, it is the practice of the Social-Democrats to convert their conferences and congresses into masquerades, into official parades intended to show that all is well within the party; every effort is made to conceal and gloss over the differences within the party. But nothing but confusion and the intellectual impoverishment of the party can result from such practices. This is one of the causes of the decline of Western European Social-Democracy, which at one time was revolutionary, but is now reformist.

We, however, cannot live and develop in this way. The policy of finding a "middle course" on questions of principle is not our policy. The policy of finding a "middle course" on questions of principle is the policy of declining and degenerating parties. Such a policy cannot but result in the Party becoming a mere bureaucratic apparatus beating the air, and detached from the masses. This path is not our path.

The whole history of our Party confirms the postulate that the history of our Party is the history of overcoming internal Party differences and the steady consolidation of the ranks of our Party on the basis of overcoming these contradictions. . . .

It follows that the fight to overcome internal Party differences is the law of development of our Party.

It may be said that this is the law for the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and not for other proletarian parties. This would not be true. This law is the law of development of all parties of any considerable size, irrespective of whether they are the proletarian party of the U.S.S.R. or the parties of the West. While in small parties in small countries it may be possible to gloss over differences, to cover them up by the authority of one or several persons, it is impossible to do so in a large party with diversified districts. In such parties development by overcoming contradictions is an inevitable element of growth and consol-

idation of the party. This is how development proceeded in the past, this is how it proceeds at the present day.

I would like here to call in the authority of Engels who, in conjunction with Marx, guided the proletarian parties in the West through several decades. I refer to the eighties of the last century, when the anti-Socialist laws were in operation in Germany, when Marx and Engels were in exile in London, and when the Social-Democratic organ, *The Social-Democrat,* was published illegally abroad, and really guided the work of German Social-Democracy. Bernstein at that time was still a revolutionary Marxist (he had not yet gone over to reformism). Engels kept up a lively correspondence with Bernstein on current questions of Social-Democratic policy. This is what he wrote to Bernstein in 1882:

> Apparently, all labor parties in big countries can develop only in the process of internal struggle, in complete accordance with the laws of dialectical development. The German Party became what it is in the struggle between the Eisenachers and the Lassalleans, in which the very friction played the principal role. Unity became possible only when the riffraff, deliberately fostered by Lassalle as instruments in the struggle, became worn out, and here too it was brought about with too great haste on our part.
>
> In France, those who, while having sacrificed their Bakuninist theories, continue to employ Bakuninist methods of fighting, and at the same time desire to sacrifice the class character of the movement to their social aims must also become worn out before unity will again become possible. To advocate unity under such conditions would be sheer stupidity. Moralising sermons will not prevent infantile sicknesses which under modern conditions must be experienced. (Marx-Engels, *Selected Correspondence,* p. 382—*Ed.*)

For, says Engels in another passage:

> Contradictions cannot be concealed for long. They are settled only by fighting them out. (*Ibid.*)

This is how the existence of contradictions within our Party

and the development of our Party through overcoming these contradictions by fighting them out are to be explained.

Where do these contradictions originate from, what are their sources?

I think that the contradictions within proletarian parties originate from two circumstances. What are these?

These are, first, the pressure of the bourgeoisie and of bourgeois ideology upon the proletariat and its party in the course of the class struggle, the pressure to which the more irresolute sections of the proletariat, and that means the wavering sections in the Party, not infrequently succumb. We must not think that the proletariat is completely isolated from society, or that it stands apart from society. The proletariat is part of society and connected with it through its diversified strata by numerous threads. The Party is part of the proletariat, and for that reason the Party cannot escape the contacts and influence of the diversified strata of bourgeois society. The pressure of the bourgeoisie and its ideology upon the proletariat and upon its Party result in bourgeois ideas, morals, habits and moods not infrequently penetrating into the proletariat and its Party through the medium of certain strata of the proletariat connected in one way or another with bourgeois society.

Second, it is the diversified character of the working class, the fact that it is made up of various strata. I think that the proletariat as a class may be divided up into three strata:

The first stratum—the principal mass of the proletariat, its main core, its constant part; this is the mass of the "thoroughbred" proletarians, who have long ago cut off all contacts with the capitalist class. This stratum of the proletariat is the most reliable support of Marxism.

The second stratum is composed of those proletarians who have recently emerged from non-proletarian classes; from the peasantry, petty bourgeoisie and intelligentsia. This stratum, having just emerged from non-proletarian classes, has brought into the proletarian class its old habits and customs, its wavering and vacillation. This stratum represents the most favorable soil for all sorts of anarchist, semi-anarchist and "ultra-Left" groupings.

Finally there is a third stratum. This is the aristocracy of

labour, the upper stratum of the working class, the most secure in its conditions compared with the other sections of the proletariat; it strives to compromise with the bourgeoisie; its predominating mood is to adapt itself to the mighty of the earth and to be "respectable." This stratum represents the most favourable soil for avowed reformists and opportunists.

In spite of their apparent difference on the surface, the last two strata of the working class represent a more or less common milieu which fosters opportunism: frank and avowed opportunism when the mood of the aristocracy of labour prevails, and the concealed opportunism of "Left" phrases when the mood of that stratum of the working class prevails which has not completely cut itself off from petty-bourgeois contacts. There is nothing surprising in the fact that avowed opportunism very frequently coincides with "ultra-Left" moods. Lenin has said more than once that the "ultra-Left" opposition is the reverse side of the Right wing, Menshevik, avowedly opportunist opposition, and this is absolutely correct. If the "ultra-Left" stands for revolution because it expects the immediate victory of the revolution, then naturally it must fall into despair, it must become disappointed in revolution if a hitch takes place and the revolution is not immediately victorious.

Naturally, at every turn in the development of the class struggle, on every occasion that the struggle becomes more acute and difficult, the difference of views, the difference in the habits and moods of the various strata of the proletariat must tell in the form of differences in the Party, and the pressure of the bourgeoisie and its ideology upon the Party must inevitably cause these differences to become more acute and to find an outlet in the form of a struggle within the proletarian party.

These are the sources of the inherent contradictions and differences within the Party.

Is it possible to avoid these contradictions and disagreements? No, it is not. To imagine that it is possible to avoid these contradictions means to deceive oneself. Engels was right when he said that it is impossible to gloss over the contradictions within the Party for any length of time, that these contradictions are solved by struggle.

This does not mean that the Party should be converted into

a debating society. On the contrary, the Party of the proletariat is, and must remain, a fighting organisation of the proletariat. I merely wish to say that we must not shut our eyes to differences within the Party if these differences are over questions of principle. I want to say that only by fighting for principle can the proletarian Party withstand the pressure and influence of the bourgeoisie. Only by overcoming internal Party contradictions can we guarantee the soundness and strength of the Party.

1926.

The Communist (New York), August, 1937, pp. 773-76.

VII. Some Questions Concerning the History of Bolshevism

Dear Comrades:

I emphatically protest against the publication in *Proletarskaya Revolyutsia (Proletarian Revolution,* No. 6, 1930) of Slutsky's anti-party and semi-Trotskyite article, "The Bolsheviks on German Social-Democracy in the Period of its Pre-War Crisis," as a discussion article.

Slutsky asserts that Lenin (the Bolsheviks) underestimated the danger of *centrism* in German Social-Democracy and in pre-war Social-Democracy in general; that is, underestimated the danger of camouflaged opportunism, the danger of conciliation with opportunism. In other words, according to Slutsky, Lenin (the Bolsheviks) did not wage a relentless struggle against opportunism, for, in essence, underestimation of centrism is tantamount to the renunciation of a forceful struggle against opportunism. Thus, it follows that in the period before the war Lenin was not yet a real Bolshevik; that it was only in the period of the imperialist war, or even at the close of that war, that Lenin became a real Bolshevik. This is the tale Slutsky tells in his article. And you, instead of branding this new-found "historian" as a slanderer and falsifier, enter into discussion with him, provide him with a forum. I cannot refrain from protesting against the publication of Slutsky's article in your journal as a discussion article, for the question of Lenin's *Bolshevism,* the question as to whether Lenin *did* or *did not* wage a relentless principled struggle against centrism as a certain form of opportunism, the question as to whether Lenin *was* or *was not* a real Bolshevik, cannot be made the subject of discussion.

In your statement entitled "From the Editors," sent to the Central Committee on October 20, you admit that the editors made a mistake in publishing Slutsky's article as a discussion article. This is all very well, of course, despite the fact that the editors' statement is very belated. But in your statement you commit a fresh mistake when you declare that the "editors consider it to be politically extremely urgent and necessary that the

entire complex of problems connected with the relations between the Bolsheviks and the pre-war Second International be further discussed and elaborated in the pages of *Proletarskaya Revolyutsia.*" This means that you intend once again to draw people into a discussion on questions which are axioms of Bolshevism. It means that you are again thinking of turning the question of Lenin's Bolshevism from an axiom into a problem needing "further elaboration." Why? On what grounds? Everyone knows that Leninism was born, grew up and became strong in its ruthless struggle against opportunism of every brand, including centrism in the West (Kautsky) and centrism in our country (Trotsky, etc.). This cannot be denied even by the outspoken enemies of Bolshevism. It is an axiom. But you are trying to drag us back by turning an axiom into a problem requiring "further elaboration." Why? On what grounds? Perhaps through ignorance of the history of Bolshevism? Perhaps for the sake of a rotten liberalism, so that the Slutskys and other disciples of Trotsky may not be able to say that they are being gagged? A rather strange sort of liberalism, this, exercised at the expense of the vital interests of Bolshevism. . . .

What, exactly, is there in Slutsky's article that the editors regard as worthy of discussion?

1. Slutsky asserts that Lenin (the Bolsheviks) did not pursue a line directed towards a rupture, towards a split with the opportunists of German Social-Democracy, with the opportunists of the Second International of the pre-war period. You want to argue against this Trotskyite thesis of Slutsky's? But what is there to argue about? Is it not clear that Slutsky is simply slandering Lenin, slandering the Bolsheviks? Slander must be branded as such and not made the subject of discussion.

Every Bolshevik, if he is really a Bolshevik, knows that long before the war, approximately in 1903-04, when the Bolshevik group took shape in Russia and when the Lefts in German Social-Democracy first made themselves felt, Lenin pursued the line directed towards a rupture, towards a split with the opportunists both here, in the Russian Social-Democratic Party, and over there, in the Second International, particularly in the German Social-Democratic Party. Every Bolshevik knows that it was for that very reason that even at that time (1903-04) the Bolsheviks won for themselves in the ranks of the opportunists of the Second

International honourable fame as "splitters" and "disrupters." But what could Lenin do, what could the Bolsheviks do; if the Left Social-Democrats in the Second International, and above all in the German Social-Democratic Party, represented a weak and impotent group, a group which had not yet taken organisational shape, which was ideologically ill-equipped and was afraid even to pronounce the word "rupture," "split"? Lenin, the Bolsheviks, could not be expected to do, from Russia, the work of the Lefts and bring about a split in the West-European parties. This is apart from the fact that organisational and ideological weakness was a characteristic feature of the Left Social-Democrats not only in the period prior to the war. As is well known, the Lefts retained this negative feature in the post-war period as well. Everyone knows the appraisal of the German Left Social-Democrats given by Lenin in his famous article, "On Junius' Pamphlet," * written in October 1916— that is, more than two years after the beginning of the war—in which Lenin, criticising a number of very serious political mistakes committed by the Left Social-Democrats in Germany, speaks of *"the weakness of* all *German Lefts, who are entangled on all sides in the vile net of Kautskian hypocrisy, pedantry, 'friendship' for the opportunists";* in which he says that *"Junius has not yet freed herself completely from the 'environment' of the German, even Left Social-Democrats, who are afraid of a split, are afraid to express revolutionary slogans to the full."*

Of all the groups in the Second International, the Russian Bolsheviks were at that time the only group which, by its organisational experience and ideological training was capable of undertaking anything serious in the sense of a direct rupture, of a split with its own opportunists in its own Russian Social-Democratic Party. If the Slutskys attempted not even to prove but simply to assume that the Russian Bolsheviks headed by Lenin did not exert all their efforts to organise a split with the opportunists (Plekhanov, Martov, Dan) and to oust the centrists (Trotsky and other adherents of the August bloc), then one could argue about Lenin's Bolshevism, about the Bolsheviks' Bolshevism. But the whole point is that the Slutskys dare not even hint at such a wild assumption. They dare not, for they are aware that the com-

* Junius was the *nom-de-plume* adopted by Rosa Luxemburg, leader of the Lefts in the Social-Democratic Party of Germany. See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works,* Vol. 19, p. 199.

monly known facts concerning the determined policy of rupture with the opportunists of all brands pursued by the Russian Bolsheviks (1904-12) cry out against such an assumption. They dare not, for they know that they would be pilloried the very next day.

But the question arises: Could the Russian Bolsheviks bring about a split with their opportunist and centrist conciliators long before the imperialist war (1904-12) without at the same time pursuing a policy of rupture, a policy of a split with the opportunists and centrists of the Second International? Who can doubt that the Russian Bolsheviks regarded their policy towards the opportunists and centrists as a model to be followed by the Lefts in the West? Who can doubt that the Russian Bolsheviks did all they could to push the Left Social-Democrats in the West, particularly the Lefts in the German Social-Democratic Party, towards a rupture, towards a split with their own opportunists and centrists? It was not the fault of Lenin and of the Russian Bolsheviks that the Left Social-Democrats in the West proved to be too immature to follow in the footsteps of the Russian Bolsheviks.

2. Slutsky reproaches Lenin and the Bolsheviks for not resolutely and wholeheartedly supporting the German Left Social-Democrats, for supporting them only with important reservations, for allowing factional considerations to prevent them from giving unqualified support to the Lefts. You want to argue against this fraudulent and utterly false reproach. But what is there to argue about? Is it not plain that Slutsky is maneuvering and trying, by hurling a spurious reproach at Lenin and the Bolsheviks, to cover up the real gaps in the position of the Lefts in Germany? Is it not plain that the Bolsheviks could not support the Lefts in Germany, who time and again wavered between Bolshevism and Menshevism, *without* important reservations, *without* seriously criticising their mistakes, and that to act otherwise would have been a *betrayal* of the working class and its revolution? Fraudulent maneuvers must be branded as such and not made a subject of discussion.

Yes, the Bolsheviks supported the Left Social-Democrats in Germany only with certain important reservations, criticising their semi-Menshevik mistakes. But for this they ought to be applauded, not reproached.

Are there people who doubt this?
Let us turn to the most generally known facts of history.

(a) In 1903, serious disagreements were revealed between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks in Russia on the question of party membership. By their formula on party membership the Bolsheviks wanted to set up an organisational barrier against the influx of non-proletarian elements into the party. The danger of such an influx was very real at that time in view of the bourgeois-democratic character of the Russian revolution. The Russian Mensheviks advocated the opposite position, which threw the doors of the party wide open to non-proletarian elements. In view of the importance of the problems of the Russian revolution for the world revolutionary movement, the West-European Social-Democrats decided to intervene. The Left Social-Democrats in Germany, Parvus and Rosa Luxemburg, then the leaders of the Lefts, also intervened. But how? Both came out against the Bolsheviks. They accused the Bolsheviks of betraying ultra-centrist and Blanquist tendencies. Subsequently, these vulgar and philistine epithets were caught up by the Mensheviks and spread far and wide.

(b) In 1905, disagreement developed between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks in Russia on the question of the character of the Russian revolution. The Bolsheviks advocated an alliance between the working class and the peasantry under the hegemony of the proletariat. The Bolsheviks asserted that the objective must be a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry for the purpose of passing immediately from the bourgeois-democratic revolution to the socialist revolution, with the support of the rural poor secured. The Mensheviks in Russia rejected the idea of the hegemony of the proletariat in the bourgeois-democratic revolution; as against the policy of alliance between the working class and the peasantry they preferred the policy of agreement with the liberal bourgeoisie; and they declared that the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the working class and the peasantry was a reactionary Blanquist scheme which ran counter to the development of the bourgeois revolution. What was the attitude of the German Left Social-Democrats, of Parvus and Rosa Luxemburg, to this controversy? They invented the utopian and semi-Menshevik

scheme of permanent revolution (a distorted representation of the Marxian scheme of revolution), which was permeated through and through with the Menshevik repudiation of the policy of alliance between the working class and the peasantry, and opposed this scheme to the Bolshevik scheme of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. Subsequently, this semi-Menshevik scheme of permanent revolution was caught up by Trotsky (in part by Martov) and transformed into a weapon of struggle against Leninism.

(c) In the period before the war, one of the most urgent questions that confronted the parties of the Second International was the national and colonial question, the question of the oppressed nations and colonies, the question of liberating the oppressed nations and colonies, the question of the paths to be followed in the struggle against imperialism, the question of the paths to be followed in order to overthrow imperialism. In the interests of developing the proletarian revolution and encircling imperialism, the Bolsheviks proposed a policy of supporting the liberation movement of the oppressed nations and colonies on the basis of the self-determination of nations, and developed the scheme for a united front between the proletarian revolution in the advanced countries and the revolutionary-liberation movement of the peoples of the colonies and oppressed countries. The opportunists of all countries, the social-chauvinists and social-imperialists of all countries hastened to rally against the Bolsheviks on this account. The Bolsheviks were baited like mad dogs. What position did the Left Social-Democrats in the West take up at that time? They developed the semi-Menshevik theory of imperialism, rejected the principle of self-determination of nations in its Marxian sense (including secession and formation of independent states), rejected the thesis that the liberation movement in the colonies and oppressed countries was of great revolutionary importance, rejected the thesis that a united front between the proletarian revolution and the movement for national emancipation was possible, and opposed this semi-Menshevik hodge-podge, which was nothing but an underestimation of the national and colonial question, to the Marxian scheme of the Bolsheviks. It is well known that this semi-Menshevik hodge-podge was subsequently caught up by Trotsky who used it as a weapon in the struggle against Leninism.

Such were the universally known mistakes committed by the Left Social-Democrats in Germany.

I need not speak of the other mistakes of the German Lefts which were criticised in various articles by Lenin.

Nor need I speak of the mistakes they committed in appraising the policy of the Bolsheviks in the period of the October Revolution.

What do these mistakes committed by the German Lefts, and referring to the history of the pre-war period, show, if not that the Left Social-Democrats, despite their leftism, had not yet rid themselves of their Menshevik baggage?

Of course, the record of the Lefts in Germany consists not only of serious mistakes. They also have great and important revolutionary deeds to their credit. I have in mind a number of services and their revolutionary line on questions of internal policy, and, in particular, of the electoral struggle, on questions concerning the struggle inside and outside of parliament, on the general strike, on war, on the Revolution of 1905 in Russia, etc. This is precisely why the Bolsheviks regarded them as Lefts, supported them and urged them forward. But this does not and cannot remove the fact that the Left Social-Democrats in Germany did commit a number of very serious political and theoretical mistakes; that they had not yet rid themselves of their Menshevik burden and therefore needed the very serious criticism of the Bolsheviks.

Now judge for yourselves whether the Bolsheviks headed by Lenin could have supported the Left Social-Democrats in the West *without serious reservations, without seriously criticising* their mistakes, and, whether it would not have been a betrayal of the interests of the working class, a betrayal of the interests of the revolution, a betrayal of communism, to act otherwise?

Is it not clear that in reproaching Lenin and the Bolsheviks for that for which he should have applauded them if he were a Bolshevik, Slutsky fully exposes himself as a semi-Menshevik, as a masked Trotskyite?

Slutsky assumes that in their appraisal of the Lefts in the West, Lenin and the Bolsheviks were guided by their own factional considerations; that, consequently, the Russian Bolsheviks sacrificed the great cause of the international revolution to their factional interests. It need hardly be proved that there can be

nothing more vulgar and despicable than such an assumption. There can be nothing more vulgar, for even the most vulgar of Mensheviks are beginning to understand that the Russian revolution is not the private cause of Russians; that on the contrary, it is the cause of the working class of the whole world, the cause of the world proletarian revolution. There can be nothing more despicable, for even the professional slanderers in the Second International are beginning to understand that the consistent and thoroughly revolutionary internationalism of the Bolsheviks is a model of proletarian internationalism for the workers of all countries.

Yes, the Russian Bolsheviks did put in the forefront the fundamental problems of the Russian revolution, such problems as that of the party, of the attitude of Marxists towards the bourgeois-democratic revolution, of the alliance between the working class and the peasantry, of the hegemony of the proletariat, of the struggle inside and outside of parliament, of the general strike, of the bourgeois-democratic revolution passing into the socialist revolution, of the dictatorship of the proletariat, of imperialism, of the self-determination of nations, of the liberation movement of oppressed nations and colonies, of the policy of supporting this movement, etc. They advanced these problems as the touchstone on which they tested the revolutionary consistency of the Left Social-Democrats in the West.

Had they the right to do so? Yes, they had. They not only had the right, but it was their duty to do so. It was their duty to do so because all these problems were also the fundamental problems of the world revolution, to whose aims the Bolsheviks subordinated their policy and their tactics. It was their duty to do so because only on such problems could they really test the revolutionary character of the various groups in the Second International. The question arises: What has the "factionalism" of the Russian Bolsheviks and what have "factional" considerations to do with this?

As far back as 1902 Lenin wrote in his pamphlet *What Is To Be Done?* that *"history has now confronted us with an immediate task which is* the most revolutionary *of all the* immediate *tasks that confront the proletariat of any country,"* that *"the fulfillment of this task, the destruction of the most powerful bulwark not only of European but also of Asiatic reaction would make the*

Russian proletariat the vanguard of the international revolutionary proletariat." Thirty years have elapsed since that pamphlet, *What Is To Be Done?,* appeared. No one will dare deny that the events of this period have brilliantly confirmed Lenin's words. But does it not follow from this that the Russian revolution was (and remains) the nodal point of the world revolution; that the fundamental problems of the Russian revolution were (and are now) also the fundamental problems of the world revolution?

Is it not clear that only on these fundamental problems was it possible to put the revolutionism of the Left Social-Democrats of the West to a real test?

Is it not clear that those who regard these problems as "factional" problems fully expose their own vulgarity and degeneracy?

3. Slutsky asserts that so far there has not been found a sufficient number of official documents testifying to Lenin's (the Bolsheviks') determined and relentless struggle against centrism. He employs this bureaucratic thesis as an irrefutable argument in favor of the postulate that Lenin (the Bolsheviks) underestimated the danger of centrism in the Second International. And you start arguing against this nonsense, against this shabby pettifoggery. But what is there to argue about? Is it not clear without argument that by his talk about documents Slutsky is trying to cover up the wretchedness and the falsity of his so-called conception?

Slutsky considers the party documents now available as inadequate. Why? On what grounds? Are not the universally known documents on the Second International, as well as those dealing with the internal party struggle in Russian Social-Democracy, sufficient clearly to demonstrate the revolutionary relentlessness of Lenin and the Bolsheviks in their struggle against the opportunists and centrists? Is Slutsky at all familiar with these documents? What other documents does he need?

Let us assume that, in addition to the documents already known, a mass of other documents were found, in the shape of, say, resolutions of the Bolsheviks, again urging the necessity of wiping out centrism. Would that mean that the mere existence of paper documents is sufficient to demonstrate the real revolutionary character and the real relentlessness of the Bolsheviks' attitude towards centrism? Who, save hopeless bureaucrats, can rely

on paper documents alone? Who, besides archive rats, does not understand that a party and its leaders must be tested first of all by their *deeds* and not only by their declarations? History knows not a few Socialists who readily signed resolutions, no matter how revolutionary, in order to escape their annoying critics. But that does not mean that they *carried out* these resolutions. Furthermore, history knows not a few Socialists who, foaming at the mouth, called upon the workers' parties of *other* countries to perform the most revolutionary actions imaginable. But that does not mean that they did not in their own party, or in their own country, *shrink* from fighting *their own* opportunists, *their own* bourgeoisie. Is not this why Lenin taught us to test revolutionary parties, trends and leaders, not by their declarations and resolutions, but by their *deeds?*

Is it not clear that if Slutsky really wanted to test the relentlessness of Lenin's and the Bolsheviks' attitude towards centrism, he should have taken as the *basis* of his article, not a few separate documents and two or three personal letters, but a test of the Bolsheviks by their *deeds,* their *history,* their *actions?* Did we not have opportunists and centrists in the Russian Social-Democratic Party? Did not the Bolsheviks wage a determined and relentless struggle against all these trends? Were not these trends organizationally and ideologically connected with the opportunists and centrists in the West? Did not the Bolsheviks fight it out with the opportunists and centrists as no other Left group fought them anywhere else in the world? How can anyone say after all this that Lenin and the Bolsheviks underestimated the danger of centrism? Why did Slutsky ignore these facts, which are of decisive importance in characterising the Bolsheviks? Why did he not resort to the most reliable method of testing Lenin and the Bolsheviks by their deeds, by their actions? Why did he prefer the less reliable method of rummaging among casually selected papers?

Because the more reliable method of testing the Bolsheviks by their deeds would have turned Slutsky's whole position upside down in a flash.

Because a test of the Bolsheviks by their deeds would have shown that the Bolsheviks are the *only* revolutionary organisation in the world which has utterly smashed the opportunists and centrists and driven them out of the party.

Because the real deeds and the real history of the Bolsheviks would have shown that Slutsky's teachers, the Trotskyites, were the *principal* and *basic* group which spread centrism in Russia, and for this purpose created a special organisation—the August bloc, which was a hotbed of centrism.

Because a test of the Bolsheviks by their deeds would have exposed Slutsky once and for all as a falsifier of the history of our party, who is trying to cover up the centrism of pre-war Trotskyism by slanderously accusing Lenin and the Bolsheviks of underestimating the danger of centrism.

That, comrade editors, is how matters stand with Slutsky and his article.

As you see, the editors made a mistake in permitting a discussion with a falsifier of the history of our party.

What induced the editors to take this wrong road? I think that they were induced to take that road by the rotten liberalism which has spread to some extent among a section of the Bolsheviks. Some Bolsheviks think that Trotskyism is a faction of communism—one which makes mistakes, it is true, which does many foolish things, is sometimes even anti-Soviet, but which, nevertheless, is a faction of communism. Hence, there is a somewhat liberal attitude towards the Trotskyites and Trotskyite-thinking people. It need hardly be proved that such a view of Trotskyism is profoundly wrong and pernicious. As a matter of fact, Trotskyism has long since ceased to be a faction of communism. As a matter of fact, Trotskyism is the vanguard of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie which is fighting communism, fighting the Soviet government, fighting the building of socialism in the U.S.S.R.

Who gave the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie an ideological weapon against Bolshevism in the form of the thesis that it is impossible to build socialism in our country, in the form of the thesis that the degeneration of the Bolsheviks is inevitable, etc.? Trotskyism gave it that weapon. It is no accident that in their attempts to prove the inevitability of the struggle against the Soviet government all the anti-Soviet groups in the U.S.S.R. have been referring to the well-known thesis of Trotskyism that it is impossible to build socialism in our country, that the degeneration of the Soviet government is inevitable, that the return to capitalism is probable.

Who gave the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie in the U.S.S.R. a tactical weapon in the form of attempts at open actions against the Soviet government? The Trotskyites, who tried to organize anti-Soviet demonstrations in Moscow and Leningrad on November 7, 1927, gave it that weapon. It is a fact that the anti-Soviet actions of the Trotskyites raised the spirits of the bourgeoisie and let loose the wrecking activities of the bourgeois experts.

Who gave the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie an organizational weapon in the form of attempts at setting up underground anti-Soviet organizations? The Trotskyites, who organized their own anti-Bolshevik illegal group, gave it that weapon. It is a fact that the underground anti-Soviet work of the Trotskyites helped the anti-Soviet groups in the U.S.S.R. to organize.

Trotskyism is the vanguard of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie.

That is why a liberal attitude towards Trotskyism, even though the latter is shattered and concealed, is stupidly bordering on crime, bordering on treason to the working class.

That is why the attempts of certain "writers" and "historians" to smuggle disguised Trotskyite rubbish into our literature must be met with a determined rebuff on the part of the Bolsheviks.

That is why we cannot permit a literary discussion with the Trotskyite smugglers.

It seems to me that "historians" and "writers" of the Trotskyite smuggler category are for the present trying to pursue their smuggling work along two lines.

First, they are trying to prove that in the period before the war Lenin underestimated the danger of centrism, thus leaving the inexperienced reader to surmise that Lenin was not yet a real revolutionary at that time; that he became one only after the war, after he had "re-equipped" himself with Trotsky's assistance. Slutsky may be regarded as a typical representative of this type of smuggler. We have seen above that Slutsky and Co. are not worth making a fuss about.

Secondly, they are trying to prove that in the period prior to the war Lenin did not realize the necessity of the bourgeois-democratic revolution passing into a socialist revolution, thus leaving the inexperienced reader to surmise that Lenin was not a real Bolshevik at that time; that he realized this necessity only after the war, after he had "re-equipped" himself with Trotsky's as-

sistance. We may regard Volosevich, author of *A Course of History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union,* as a typical representative of this type of smuggler. True, as far back as 1905 Lenin wrote that *"from the democratic revolution we shall at once, and just in accordance with the measure of our strength, the strength of the class-conscious and organized proletariat, begin to pass over to the socialist revolution,"* that *"we stand for uninterrupted revolution,"* that *"we shall not stop half-way."* True, a very large number of facts and documents of an analogous nature can be found in the works of Lenin. But what do the Voloseviches care about the facts of Lenin's life and work? The Voloseviches write in order, by camouflaging themselves in Bolshevik colors, to drag in their anti-Leninist contraband, to utter lies about the Bolsheviks and to falsify the history of the Bolshevik Party.

As you see, the Voloseviches are worthy of the Slutskys.

Such are the "paths and crossroads" of the Trotskyite smugglers.

You understand yourselves that it is not the business of the editors to facilitate the smuggling activities of such "historians" by providing them with a platform for discussion.

The task of the editors is, in my opinion, to raise the questions concerning the history of Bolshevism to the proper level, to put the study of the history of our party on scientific, Bolshevik lines, and to concentrate attention against the Trotskyite and all other falsifiers of the history of our party by systematically tearing off their masks.

This is all the more necessary since even some of our historians—I say, historians, without quotation marks, *Bolshevik* historians of our party—are not free from mistakes which bring grist to the mill of the Slutskys and Voloseviches. In this respect, even Comrade Yaroslavsky is not, unfortunately, an exception; his books on the history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, despite all their merits, contain a number of errors in matters of principle and history.

With Communist greetings,

J. STALIN

1931.

Joseph Stalin, *Leninism (Selected Writings),* pp. 222-33.

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